Distr.
GENERAL
E/ESCWA/20/10/Rev.1
28 May 1999
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: ARABIC

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA

Twentieth session
Beirut, 27-28 May 1999

Resolution 220 (XX). Adoption of the Beirut Declaration

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Recalling its resolution 217 (XIX) of 7 May 1997 on a call for the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, in particular paragraph 3, in which the Commission invites the Governments of the member States to take the opportunity to formulate a new vision for the region in line with regional and world developments in the coming century,

Recalling also the call by the Commission for the issuance of a declaration embodying the Commission's vision of the future and its role in coordinating the policies of the member States in the economic and social spheres and broadening cooperation between them,[1/]

1. *Decides* to adopt the Beirut Declaration, annexed hereto, as a new vision that defines the role and tasks of the Commission in line with regional and world developments in the coming century;

2. *Invites* the member States to take inspiration from elements of the Declaration in formulating their national policies and programmes and in strengthening international and regional cooperation between themselves;

3. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to ensure that in future the activities of ESCWA take into account the content of the Declaration.

2nd plenary meeting
27 May 1999

1/ E/1997/39-E/ESCWA/19/9, para. 45.

Annex

BEIRUT DECLARATION

THE REGION OF WESTERN ASIA PREPARING FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

We the representatives of the Governments of the member States of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, meeting in Beirut on 27 and 28 May 1999 for the twentieth session of the Commission and gathered here today to celebrate its twenty-fifth anniversary,

Acting in accordance with the desire of our Governments to fulfil their responsibility to realize the aspirations of their peoples towards integrated, sustainable development; stressing their unique character and their contributions to civilization; believing in the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations; being aware of the development of international relations and partnerships; and acting on the experience and lessons of the past, understanding the present and its dimensions, and looking confidently to the future,

Taking the opportunity offered by the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Commission,

Present our vision of the role and tasks of the Commission in the light of regional and world developments in the coming century, as follows:

1. The growth of globalism does not diminish or detract from the extreme importance of action at the regional level, nor does the global nature of problems preclude area-specific solutions and policies. In the trend towards globalism—with full respect for the sovereignty of States—regionalism cannot be bypassed. Cooperative arrangements within homogeneous groups, especially of small and medium-sized countries, represent a bridge between the national and the global. Moreover, development trends and requirements do not materialize all at once throughout the world, but rather in the form of regional waves, in which the conditions and situations peculiar to each area must be taken into account.

2. The role and functions of the Commission are based primarily on development and economic and social cooperation, the object being to raise the level of economic activity in Western Asia and to maintain and strengthen economic relations between member countries and other countries of the world. Development can be achieved only to the extent that it is comprehensive, integrated and sustainable in both the economic and social spheres.

3. Recognition of the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of States, non-interference in their internal affairs and settlement of disputes by peaceful means in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law constitute the basis of a sound international community. However, no State is capable of achieving comprehensive, sustainable development unless there exists international cooperation in the economic and social fields that is founded, on the one hand, on just and comprehensive peace, security on equal terms and respect for the principles of justice and international law and, on the other hand, on international relations that are balanced in all areas and based on effective international cooperation and a genuine sense of partnership on the part of donor States and international donor institutions.

4. The increasing importance of regional cooperation in the economic and social spheres places a great responsibility on the Commission. As part of the United Nations system, the Commission is the natural place for dealing with issues related to such cooperation, for it is not merely a regional arrangement for expressing the needs and particularities of the region to which it belongs, but also the embodiment, at the

regional level, of the universal purposes and principles set forth in the Charter and resolutions of the United Nations.

5. The future fulfilment of the region's potential, on the threshold of the twenty-first century, requires its transformation into a zone of economic and social cooperation and mutual respect of all for the rights and interests of the peoples of the region in an atmosphere of peace both just and comprehensive, security based on equality, and economic and social stability. These goals can be achieved only if cooperation is strengthened between the members of the Commission, the United Nations and international financial institutions and the following objective conditions are met:

(a) The achievement of a just and comprehensive peace, security on equal terms and stability in the region of Western Asia through the implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions, and full respect for international legitimacy and the foundations and principles of the peace process, foremost among them the principle of land for peace and respect for the rights and legitimate aspirations of peoples;

(b) The creation of an environment that will stimulate economic and social cooperation and development in all domains, including cooperation between the countries of the region in the areas of water, environment and energy, which calls for a comprehensive view that takes into account the balancing of national needs and global requirements and is based on the integration of the various aspects of sustainable human development, with recognition of the mutually supportive roles of an effective State administration, an efficient private sector and a sound civil society;

(c) The exertion of efforts to integrate the ESCWA member countries into the international economic and trading system by assisting them in dealing with the rules and principles on which it is based and maximizing the advantages and at the same time limiting the drawbacks that might be involved, through the establishment of a dialogue with the international organizations concerned;

(d) The promotion of democracy and respect for human rights, including the right to life, the right of self-determination and the right to development, and for fundamental freedoms within a context of respect for national and regional characteristics and different religious, cultural and historical values. Achieving complementarity between freedom and responsibility at all levels in a State based on institutions and law constitutes a fundamental guarantee that will enable the region to continue its creative participation in the civilization of humankind;

(e) The development of the role of the Commission through support for its subsidiary bodies and adequate support from the United Nations system, including the financial and human resources needed to enable the Commission to conduct its activities as effectively as possible so that it may bolster the efforts of the member countries and become a basic economic and social forum for promoting regional economic cooperation on a sound basis, thereby helping to strengthen development and progress among the ESCWA member countries.

2nd plenary meeting
27 May 1999